

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MICROSCOPISTS AND IMAGING SCIENTISTS

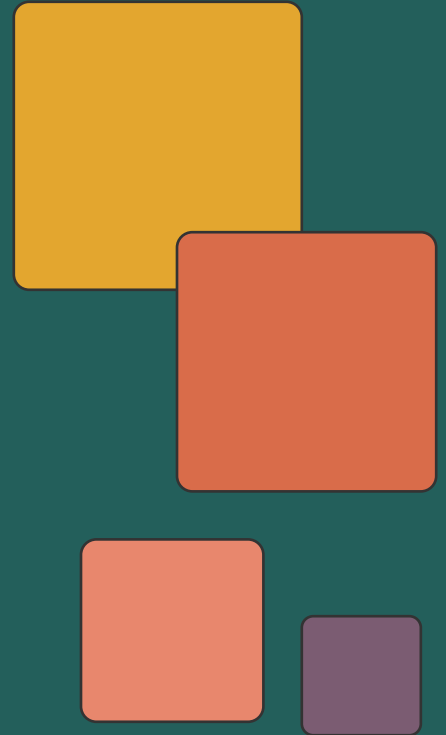
Getting your résumé ready for a non-academic role

Turning an academic CV into a résumé that works in the microscopy capital equipment industry, biotech, and pharma.

BINA Corporate Partners Working Group

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Where imaging scientists usually land

The role determines which parts of your CV skills matter most.

Microscopy & capital equipment

Vendors, component makers, distributors, software companies

- Application Scientist / Specialist — demos, customer training, method development, pre- and post-sale technical support
- Field Service Engineer — installation, alignment, preventive maintenance, repair
- Product / Portfolio Manager — owns a product line's roadmap, positioning, and margin
- Sales / Account Manager — territory ownership and long capital sales cycles
- R&D Scientist, Optical Engineer, Software / Image Analysis Engineer
- Technical Marketing & Scientific Content — app notes, webinars, launch material
- Business Development & Partnerships — core labs, consortia, key accounts

Biotech & pharma

Therapeutics companies, CROs, diagnostics, tool users at scale

- Scientist I/II — imaging, assay development, high-content and high-throughput screening
- Imaging Core / Platform Lead — running the internal facility and its capital roadmap
- Image Analysis or Computational Biologist — pipelines, segmentation, quantification at scale
- Field Application Scientist — vendor-side role embedded with pharma customers
- Translational & Preclinical Imaging — biomarker and efficacy readouts
- Medical Science Liaison — field-facing scientific exchange
- Analytical / QC / CMC and regulatory-facing roles in a GxP environment

Browse real postings before you write anything: [Jobs - BioImaging North America Site](#) · jobs.microscopy.org · jobs.biospace.com · nature.com/naturecareers

Decode the titles before you apply

Titles are not standardized across companies.

The same job, four names

Application Scientist · Field Application Specialist · Technical Sales Specialist · Product Application Engineer

Roughly the same work at four companies. Search by responsibility, not just by title, or you will filter out most of your market.



Read every posting

- Pick three-five target companies and read all of their open roles, not just the one you want
- Note which department each title sits in (Sales, Marketing, Service) and who it reports to
- Collect the verbs and nouns that repeat across postings since that is the industry or company's vocabulary



Study real people

- On LinkedIn: go to the company, open People, filter by title
- Read the last three roles of ten people who hold the job you want
- Look for the pattern in how they entered: core facility, postdoc, service, or internal move



Ask directly

- "What does your title actually mean day to day?"
- "How did you get from your first industry role to this one?"
- "What surprised you most in the first year?"
- Levels (I / II / Senior / Principal) often run on a parallel track to management

Career-path self-assessment for PhDs and postdocs (free, 20 career paths mapped to your skills): myidp.sciencecareers.org/

Start before you're ready

Networking converts slowly and applications close fast. Roles generally open for immediate hire.*

Learning not looking (12–18 months out)

- Research, network, and explore long before you need a job because the conversations that matter take months to mature
- Look for internships, co-ops, and industry collaboration projects; some vendors run formal programs
- Beta-test or demo an instrument or software release for a vendor and you become a known quantity
- Your local sales rep and application scientist already visit your facility, they hold the roles you want and they know when reqs open
- Demos, installs, and service visits are informational interviews in disguise
- Conference booths are staffed by exactly these people: M&M, ASCB, SLAS, Focus on Microscopy, and the BINA annual meeting
- Have your elevator pitch ready, connect immediately by email or LinkedIn with a follow-up

Move fast when a role posts

- Apply within 24–48 hours. Many requisitions are reviewed in the order received, and some close once a first batch of qualified candidates is in
- Set alerts everywhere you can: LinkedIn, each target company's own portal, and the community job boards
- Keep a base résumé ready so applying takes 30 minutes, not a weekend, most portals use a very similar Workday template
- Track every application in a spreadsheet: role, company, date, version sent, contact, follow-up date
- If a role closes before you apply, message someone on that team anyway
- Line up your references early in case they are checked
- Have a base cover letter ready to tailor quickly
- Consider an online portfolio

Set up alerts: [LinkedIn](#) · [MSA Placement Office](#) · [BINA](#) · [image.sc forum](#) · Confocal Microscopy List (confocalmicroscopy@lists.umn.edu) · [Microscopy Listserver](#)

* Some companies will post ghost jobs to build applicant pool or will have a specific talent pool location on their career portal [Danaher Talent Community - Sign Up Here](#) | [Danaher](#)

Résumé vs CV

You need both.

CV

Purpose

Complete record of your academic and research career

Length

Unlimited and grows for your whole career

Content

Everything: all publications, posters, teaching, service work

Ordering

Chronological within standard academic sections

Voice

Neutral and descriptive

Publications

The full list

Design

Plain and consistent

RÉSUMÉ

Marketing document aimed at one specific job

1–2 pages. Two is normal and fine for a PhD

Only what supports this application

Usually reverse chronological and prioritize relevance

Achievement and action

3–5 selected, or a single summary line with counts, link to portfolio

Clean and readable; parser-safe for online applications

Keep the CV current even after you leave academia as it is the source you cut every future résumé from, you may go back to academia, and your online profiles should agree with it.

Anatomy of the industry résumé

Section order is an argument. Put the evidence a hiring manager needs in the first half page.

1 Header

Name, city and state (no street address), phone, email, LinkedIn URL. Nothing extra here.

2 Professional summary

Two or three lines naming the role you want and the two or three things that qualify you. Tailored for every application.

3 Technical skills

Grouped and scannable. This is the block that gets keyword-matched, so it sits high.

4 Professional experience

Reverse chronological. Postdoc and PhD are jobs so title them as work, not as coursework. Achievement bullets, not duties.

5 Education

Degree, field, institution, year. A new PhD can keep this high; move it below experience once you have industry roles. Do not put your GPA, do include any honors.

6 Selected publications & presentations

Three to five that are relevant, or one line: "12 peer-reviewed publications; 4 invited talks." This will not be comprehensive, have that somewhere else.

7 Optional closers

Certifications, patents, leadership and working-group roles, teaching and training, languages, software you have released.

8 Leave out

References available on request, GPA, hobbies, high school, an objective statement, and skill rating bars.

Full guide with real sample résumés, including a postdoc applying to industry (free, NIH OITE): www.training.nih.gov/pdf/online-career-resources-guides/

Translate: before and after

Academic to business language focusing on achievement and impact .

FROM THE CV

Performed confocal and super-resolution imaging of neuronal cultures to study organelle transport.

Trained rotation students and new users on the spinning-disk confocal.

Co-authored six publications on mitochondrial dynamics; presented at four conferences.



ON THE RÉSUMÉ

Built and validated a live-cell confocal workflow now used by four lab groups, cutting acquisition time per experiment from six hours to 90 minutes.

Trained 25+ users across nine labs on spinning-disk operation and sample prep; authored the SOP the facility still runs on, reducing repeat-training requests by half.

Translated complex imaging data for specialist and non-specialist audiences across six peer-reviewed papers and four conference talks, including an invited vendor workshop.

The formula

Strong verb + what you did + how you did it + the measurable result or who uses it now

You do have numbers

Here is where yours are hiding.



People & training

- Users trained, labs supported, sites covered
- Students, rotations, and junior staff mentored
- Workshops or courses delivered and attendance



Instruments & operations

- Systems maintained, uptime achieved
- Cost recovery or chargeback revenue
- Service calls resolved, downtime reduced



Throughput & data

- Samples, plates, or conditions per week
- Datasets or images processed; terabytes managed
- Hours saved per protocol after your change



Money & scope

- Grant or fellowship dollars won or contributed to
- Capital purchases you specced or justified
- Budget influenced, vendors coordinated



Quality & speed

- Time-to-result improvements
- Failure, artifact, or rework rate reduced
- Assay variability or coefficient of variance brought down



Reach

- Publications, citations, invited talks
- Cross-site or cross-institution collaborations
- Protocols or tools adopted by other groups

Only claim what you could defend in an interview. If you cannot source a specific number, describe the scope instead, example: "a nine-lab shared facility" beats a figure you invented.

A skills section that gets matched

Group them so a human can scan and a parser can match. Only list what you would defend live.



Imaging modalities

Confocal · spinning disk · light sheet · TIRF · two-photon · STED / SIM / SMLM · widefield & slide scanning · high-content imaging · SEM / TEM / cryo-EM · label-free · specific brand products



Instrumentation & method

Alignment and calibration · optical bench work · QC and performance validation · sample prep and clearing · live-cell and environmental control · automation and robotics integration · multi-omic / spatial workflows



Analysis & code

Fiji / ImageJ · CellProfiler · Imaris · arivis · Aivia · napari · QuPath · Python · MATLAB · R · deep-learning segmentation · statistical analysis · version control



Data & standards

OME / OME-Zarr · Bio-Formats · OMERO · metadata standards (REMBI, 4DN-BINA-OME) · FAIR data practice · LIMS / ELN · large-dataset and storage management



Quality & regulatory

GLP · GMP · 21 CFR Part 11 · ISO 13485 · design control · SOP authoring · validation and documentation — name these only if you have genuinely worked under them



Business & interpersonal

Customer training and support · technical presentations · cross-functional collaboration · project management · procurement and vendor management · scientific writing

Mirror the exact spelling the job description uses, if the posting says "high-content screening," do not write only "HCS." Include both the term and its acronym once.

Tailoring for the role

Not a new résumé for every posting — one to three base versions, tuned each time to industry and role.



Work the job description

- Paste the posting into a blank document and highlight every noun: instruments, software, methods, standards, deliverables, audiences
- Rank the top three requirements. Your first two bullets under your most recent role must answer them
- Echo their vocabulary where it is honestly true, e.x. "field application" if that is their word, not your paraphrase
- Match the seniority verbs: supported, contributed to, led, owned.
Overclaiming is caught in the first interview
- Revise or rewrite the professional summary for every single application, "Show me you know me"
- Save a copy of the posting. It will come down, and you will want it in front of you before the interview



Build a small system

- Keep one master document that may be overly long to start and trim from
- Maintain two or three base résumés by role family, i.e. applications and support, product and marketing, image analysis and data
- Version the files: Lastname_Firstname_Resume_Company.pdf, so the recruiter's download folder makes sense
- Track applications in a sheet: role, company, date, version sent, referral, contact, follow-up date, outcome
- Review the tracker monthly. Where you keep getting screened out tells you which base version may be weak
- Read the final document out loud against the posting before you submit
- Use AI to role play recruiter, hiring manager, interview panel, give it real questions you have been asked over time

Tailoring is not decoration. It is the difference between a résumé that says "I am a scientist" and one that says "I am the person in this posting."

Gaps in skills or experience*

Apply at roughly 60–70% of the requirements. Do not do the hiring manager's screening for them.



You lack a specific instrument

Name the adjacent platform and make the transfer explicit. "Cross-trained on three confocal platforms; brought up an unfamiliar system to publication-quality data in under two weeks." Vendors train new hires on their own hardware — what they cannot train is optical judgement.



You have no industry experience

You almost certainly do. Core facility service work is customer support. Collaborations are cross-functional projects. Vendor demos, beta tests, and instrument evaluations are direct industry exposure. Name them in industry language.



You have no management title

Show scope instead of title: rotation students mentored, committee or working-group leads, teaching, ERG or society roles, a facility budget you influenced. Leadership without headcount is normal in early industry roles.



You have no business exposure

Close it cheaply and visibly: society working groups, free product-management and commercial primers, informational interviews, a short course. Then put it on the résumé as something you did, not something you are planning.

Address a real gap in one confident sentence in the cover letter, then move on. Never apologize for it and never raise it unprompted in an interview.

*If there are highly specific mandatory screening questions in the online application, this is the most likely place you will get cut without a human review.

Formatting and applicant tracking systems

Two different documents: the one a parser reads, and the one you hand to a person.

For the online application

- One column. Multi-column layouts, text boxes, tables, and content in headers or footers are the most common parsing failures
- Standard section headings: Professional Experience, Education, Technical Skills. Clever headings do not get recognized
- Text-based PDF or .docx, whatever the portal asks for. Never a scan or an image
- Calibri, Arial, Cambria, or Helvetica; 10–12 pt body; margins between 0.5" and 1"
- No photo, no logos, no icons, no skill rating bars, no shading behind text
- Spell out an acronym once alongside the acronym itself, so both match

For a human being

- The version you email directly, hand over at a conference booth, or attach to a referral can be designed
- Restrained typography, generous white space, and a clear hierarchy
- Keep it recognizably the same document with the same content but better presentation
- Always send PDF to a person so your formatting survives
- Print it once and read it on paper. You will find things the screen hides
- Have two people read it: one in your field, one outside it
- If a portal makes you retype your history into form fields, do it carefully because that text, not your attached PDF, is often what actually gets searched

Formatting rules, section-by-section templates, and sample documents (free, NIH OITE): www.training.nih.gov/pdf/online-career-resources-guides/

Using AI well

The 3 R's not the 3 W's: Revise, refine, review not write, whitewash, wing it

Do

- Use AI to help you, AI use is a skill you will be expected to have, be able to explain how and why you used it like a reasonable person
- Teach it your voice first by uploading three things you actually wrote before asking for any edits
- Give it your CV and the job description together, then ask what is missing and what is buried
- Ask it to be critical: "What would a hiring manager cut?" "Where am I vague?" "What would you not believe?"
- Ask how the document reads to a parser and which keywords from the posting are absent
- Ask a different AI to critically read what you've got
- Have it role-play the recruiter screen, the hiring manager, and the interview panel and ask for a scorecard
- Practice interviews out loud, with follow-up questions, until the stories are fluent

Don't

- Let it write the first draft because you will get fluent, generic, possibly meaningless jargon text and lose the specifics that make you hireable
- Let it invent metrics, tools, responsibilities, or a job title you did not hold
- Paste unpublished data, confidential collaborator information, or anyone else's personal details
- Assume its favourite buzzwords match the posting's vocabulary, double check against the actual text
- Include sentence you don't really understand or cannot expand on under questioning
- Forget that recruiters read hundreds of these, they are getting very good at spotting AI "slop"
- FORGET TO CRITICALLY READ, you are responsible for what you submit not the AI

Read your résumé aloud and have someone else review it. Get real human input since a real human will make the ultimate hiring decision.

Cover letters

Controversial, often mandatory though

1

Hook

Name the exact role and one specific reason it is this company: a product you have used, a paper from their team, a person you met at a booth. Generic openings are the fastest way to be skimmed past.

2

Bridge

Two or three sentences connecting your work to the company hiring need. This is "show me you know me" which is demonstrating that you understand what the team is really trying to do.

3

Proof

One short story with a result. Not a summary of your résumé but a single concrete episode that shows you doing the thing the core job requires. This can be a great way to connect skills you picked up in non-traditional ways, like fundraising for an organization as an example of sales skills.

4

Close

What you would want to understand or contribute in the first ninety days, and a clear, unapologetic ask for a conversation or opportunity to advance in consideration.

Four things that lose in a cover letter

- Restating your résumé in paragraph form
- Explaining why the job is good for you rather than what you bring to the job
- The same letter with the company name swapped
- No specificity about why THIS job for THIS company

LinkedIn and your digital self

It is a primary search tool for recruiters and a resource that will be checked for consistency.

Look critically at your profile

Headline is your highest-value real estate:

Instead of "PhD Candidate, Cell Biology"
Write "Imaging Scientist | Confocal & Super-Resolution | Image Analysis (Fiji, Python)"

- Custom URL, a real photo, and a banner especially a micrograph of your own
- About section in first person, three short paragraphs, no third-person bio voice
- Fill the Skills section properly since recruiters filter on it directly
- Keep dates, titles, and degrees consistent with your résumé, CV, ORCID, and Google Scholar
- Add working-group, society, and volunteer roles to round things out
- Ask two people you have worked with for a recommendation while the work is recent

Use the Premium features

- Turn on the recruiter-only "Open to Work" setting, it is not visible to your current colleagues
- Follow target companies and switch on job alerts for their postings
- Comment thoughtfully on imaging or other relevant content once or twice a month. Visibility beats volume, and you become a familiar name before you apply
- Create your own posts consistent with the role type you want to be considered for
- Send informational interview requests here through InMail or direct message, prioritize people who are active themselves
- Reconnect with people from courses, workshops, and conferences while you have a reason to
- Premium is worth the cost for months during an active search for InMail and applicant insights, you likely don't need a standing subscription
- For skills gaps, consider LinkedIn Learning courses which are visible on your profile

LinkedIn is common for industry but not the only place, use networks like BINA or BlueSky, but try to represent yourself consistently across different spaces.

Networking and informational interviews

Bioimaging is a small community for better and worse, many/most people will help if asked politely.



How to run an informational interview

- Ask for twenty to thirty minutes to learn about their path. Never ask for a job or referral in a first message
- Prepare three to five questions so you are the one doing the work for the interview
- Close with "who else should I be talking to?" and ask for a connection
- Follow up within 24 hours with thanks and one specific thing you took away
- Log every contact and re-touch every three or four months with something useful (a paper, a congratulation, etc.) not a request
- Where to find people: BINA working groups, society meetings, vendor workshops and demos, core facility manager networks, the image.sc forum, and your own department's alumni, LinkedIn, BlueSky
- Have a one-sentence version or elevator pitch of what you do ready and practice it
- Ask what surprised them, what they miss about the bench, and what they would do differently



Example request

Hi [Name] — I'm a postdoc at [Institution] working on [one sentence of what you do]. I'm starting to explore [role type] roles in [microscopy / biotech], and your move from [X] to [Y] is close to what I'm considering. Would you have twenty minutes in the next two weeks to share the story of how you made that transition? Happy to work around your schedule. Thank you for your consideration.

Don't

- Send the same note to twelve people at one company
- Ghost someone after they help you, send a thank you
- Treat a first conversation as a screening call, you can always learn something or make a connection

Interview preparation

Translate your experiences to connect and resonate.

STAR Interview Method, and eight stories

STAR is a standard question format in interviews that you can plan around ahead of time. Situation · Task · Action · Result with the Result stated in one sentence, out loud, before you stop talking.

- Write eight to ten stories and reuse them across dozens of questions
- Cover: a failure, a conflict, a hard deadline, teaching someone, a project you killed, cross-functional work, an ambiguous problem, a win

Expect a presentation

- Most technical and field-facing roles include a talk, a demo, or a customer-scenario exercise later in the interview process
- Practice explaining one method to a non-expert in three minutes without jargon
- For application and sales-adjacent roles, they are watching how you handle being interrupted and questioned
- Tell a story don't deliver a lab meeting

Come with your own questions

- | | |
|---|--|
| – How will you measure success in this role at six and twelve months? | – What does the travel actually look like across a typical quarter? |
| – Why is the role open — growth, backfill, or a new function? | – What does the first ninety days involve, and who trains me? |
| – How does this team work with R&D, sales, marketing, and customers? | – What is the hardest part of this job that is not in the description? |

[Using the STAR method for your next behavioral interview \(worksheet included\) – Career Advising & Professional Development | MIT](#)

Timelines, follow-up, and the industry pace

Hiring moves in weeks, not in academic terms. Match the tempo.

What the pace feels like

- Slow, then fast, then slow, then very fast
- A recruiter screen to an offer commonly runs two to six weeks; capital equipment roles can run longer when territory or budget cycles are involved
- Reply to recruiters the same day. They are juggling many requisitions and momentum matters
- Ask for the timeline at the end of every stage, then follow up once you are past the date they gave you
- There are usually 3-6 interviews: screening with a recruiter, screening with the hiring manager, a panel and/or presentation, a follow-up with hiring manager
- Initial interviews will be remote, you may be asked to travel for final meetings (if you are asked to pay and reimbursement is not discussed this is a red flag)
- Silence is usually process, not rejection. Keep applying regardless, nothing is real until it is in writing and signed
- Expect to negotiate: base, bonus or commission structure, sign-on, relocation, start date, territory, and time off are all in play

Thank-you notes and follow-up

- Within 24 hours, to each interviewer separately, referencing something specific they said. Send to recruiter if you do not have individual emails.
- Short, three to four sentences. One line that answers a question you wish you had answered better
- After a rejection, thank them anyway and ask to stay in touch since re-posts and adjacent openings are common

Worth remembering

When someone tells you about their career, they are telling a story and not the real-time play-by-play. The story only exists in retrospect. Yours will too.

Keep your application Excel sheet up-to-date with interview details! Names, dates, questions, etc.

The rejection reality

The 2026 job market is low hire and low fire, and very competitive. There are more applicants per posting, longer searches, and hiring concentrated in specific functions rather than spread evenly. Even doing everything in this deck correctly, and following every bit of advice you get, you should expect rejections and silence.

That is the market, not a verdict on you.



Silence is not a verdict

A large share of no-responses aren't rejections of you at all. Requisitions get frozen, budgets move, roles get filled internally, or the posting was never fully approved. You will never be told which one it was.



Ask narrowly for feedback

When a human rejects you, ask a specific question. "Was there a particular gap that ruled me out?" gets answered far more often than an open "any feedback?" You may not get an answer but if you do it can be valuable information.



Reach the hiring manager

If someone posts that they are hiring for their team, apply through the portal AND message them to say you have applied. The portal on its own rarely puts you in front of the person who decides.



Set a pace you can hold

Start before you are totally ready, and pick a searching and applying cadence you can sustain for months rather than weeks. A long search is normal right now, and burning out mid-way makes every later application worse.

The joys of an offer

Expect to move fast

- You will be asked to negotiate, decide, and usually start as soon as possible.
- Most postings now carry a salary range because of state pay-transparency laws.
- That band comes from a compensation analysis of the title and the location. It is often the least negotiable number in the whole offer.
- So negotiate the package, not just the base.
- Ask for the full offer in writing, and for a few days to consider it. Both are normal requests and neither will cost you the job.

Ask about all of it

Every item below is part of the offer, and several are more movable than base pay:

Annual bonus

Variable comp / commission

Sign-on bonus

Vacation & leave types

Health & insurance

Retirement match

Relocation support

Company vehicle

Home office allowance

Start date

Title & level

Development budget

AND KEEP THE MACHINERY RUNNING

Don't burn your bridges or the network you just built. Industry moves fast and is volatile. Staying ready with a current résumé, an up-to-date profile, and contacts who have visibility into what you've been doing is what makes the next move easier than this one.

Resource library

Everything linked in this deck, in one place. All of these are free.

Career guides for scientists

[NIH OITE — CV, résumé, cover letter and interview guides, with samples](http://www.training.nih.gov/pdf/online-career-resources-guides)

www.training.nih.gov/pdf/online-career-resources-guides

[NIH OITE — industry careers overview](http://www.training.nih.gov/career-services/readiness-exploration/industry-careers)

www.training.nih.gov/career-services/readiness-exploration/industry-careers

[myIDP — career self-assessment for PhDs and postdocs](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org)

myidp.sciencecareers.org

[Science Careers — employer research and informational interviews](http://www.science.org/careers)

www.science.org/careers

[MIT CAPD — Industry Bound Career Series](http://capd.mit.edu/industry-bound-career-series)

capd.mit.edu/industry-bound-career-series

[MIT CAPD — the STAR method for behavioral interviews](http://capd.mit.edu/resources/the-star-method-for-behavioral-interviews)

capd.mit.edu/resources/the-star-method-for-behavioral-interviews

Bioimaging community

[BioImaging North America](http://www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org)

www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org

[BINA Early Career WG — "How to Get Hired" seminar and slides](http://www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/early-career-wg)

www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/early-career-wg

[BINA resource collection, across all working groups](http://www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/resources)

www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/resources

[image.sc forum — the imaging software community](http://forum.image.sc)

forum.image.sc

[Microscopy Listserver](http://www.microscopylistserver.com)

www.microscopylistserver.com

Microscopy job boards

[BINA Job Openings — bioimaging roles worldwide](http://www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/jobs)

www.bioimagingnorthamerica.org/jobs

[MSA Placement Office — microscopy-specific roles](http://jobs.microscopy.org)

jobs.microscopy.org

[Microlist — searchable microscopy jobs](http://www.microlist.org/jobs)

www.microlist.org/jobs

[FocalPlane jobs, powered by MicroscopyDB](http://focalplane.biologists.com/jobs)

focalplane.biologists.com/jobs

[Confocal Microscopy List — email confocalmicroscopy@lists.umn.edu](mailto:confocalmicroscopy@lists.umn.edu)

Industry boards and alerts

[BioSpace — biotech and pharma](http://jobs.biospace.com)

jobs.biospace.com

[Nature Careers](http://www.nature.com/naturecareers)

www.nature.com/naturecareers

[Science Careers job board](http://jobs.sciencecareers.org)

jobs.sciencecareers.org

[How to set up LinkedIn job alerts](http://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a511279)

www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a511279

[Danaher Talent Community — a vendor talent network](http://jobs.danaher.com/global/en/jointalentcommunity)

jobs.danaher.com/global/en/jointalentcommunity

Plus each target vendor's own careers portal

Links verified September 2026. If one has moved, search the resource by name.

Work

Your
story

Send your careers story
to: naturecareerseditor@nature.com

TAKE THE LEAP INTO INDUSTRY

Landing that first job outside academia requires planning, homework and networking – and a bit of soul-searching. **By Spoorthy Raman**

Plant physiologist Melanie Zeppel had heard that hard work, a good publication list and securing highly competitive postdoctoral research fellowships would guarantee a successful career in academia. Despite having it all, a faculty position eluded her for 12 years after her PhD.

Frustrated with the wait, Zeppel, who is in Sydney, Australia, decided to look at emerging fields with job opportunities outside academia, such as data science. Leaning on her knowledge of statistics, she took online courses, steeping herself in machine-learning exercises. It paid off: in 2020, she was offered a data-scientist position at a big Australian bank. Now in her third industry job as a soil-carbon data scientist at New Forests, a nature-based investment-management company in Sydney, Zeppel says that her work-life balance is much better than it was in academia.

If numbers tell a story, Zeppel's is no exception. In 2021, Australia had nearly 185,000 PhD graduates, up from 135,000 in 2016. But the number of academic positions had shrunk – falling from 54,086 in 2016 to 46,971 in 2021. The trend is similar across Canada and the United States. In 2021, more US PhD graduates were hired by private companies (43%) than by academic institutions (36%).

With an oversupply of PhD graduates and a shrinking number of academic positions globally, the reality is that most PhD graduates are being hired outside academia, with many landing intellectually stimulating and financially rewarding positions in industry.

These statistics are just one part of the pie. Many opt to leave academia for reasons such as declining mental health triggered by pressure to publish, or job insecurity, bullying by supervisors or low wages. People often secure industry positions that have 'lead', 'scientist' or 'researcher' in their titles. But post-PhD researchers aren't always aware of how to land such a job. "Universities generally don't give any career guidance for people that are in graduate programmes," says David Tang, a user-experience researcher at a major financial



Melanie Zeppel stepped off the academic path to become a data scientist in industry.

services company in Arlington, Virginia, who worked out his own path to a non-academic career after gaining a social psychology PhD.

Those who have made the successful leap from academia to industries such as technology and pharmaceuticals share their career journeys, how they found their job and what strategies worked best in their search. Here are their tips and advice to help those still in graduate programmes achieve a smooth transition.

Soul-searching before job hunting

Many job searchers turn to the Internet to whip out 'how to' guides to finding jobs in industry. But before keying in 'jobs I can get with a PhD in [field]' on the Google search bar, career coach Jennifer Polk in Toronto, Canada, suggests hitting pause. The long list of job adverts that the search can bring up is likely to stress people out, she says. Instead, she suggests clients at her consultancy From PhD to Life do some soul-searching, by thinking about what is important to them, what they like doing and what their strengths and skill sets are. "I think it's necessary for career

exploration and eventual job searching, but it's also necessary for your spirit as a person in the world," says Polk.

When faced with the question of what to do after her postdoc, cancer biologist Nimi Vashi reflected on her interests and zeroed in on her attraction to working for a start-up company. During her PhD and postdoctoral studies, Vashi realized that she came alive when attending entrepreneurship conferences and biomedicine hackathons, in which clinicians, scientists, patients and carers discuss challenges and brainstorm solutions. She was also drawn towards building products. "I decided it's time that I experiment with working for start-ups, [until] I can start my own," she says. In 2022, she began her career at Epinoma, a diagnostics start-up in San Francisco, California, where she leads the therapeutics division.

PhD graduates who are curious about industry should talk to someone who's already working in the sector. But finding these human resources once they've left the academic halls isn't always easy. When Tang wanted to explore options, he started by asking friends

Work/Careers

and acquaintances if they knew anyone who had a successful career in any industry. Once he had made a few contacts, it was easy to find others whose path matched his career ambitions in the tech industry.

Early-career researchers can expand their networks by attending conferences, hackathons and research meet-ups that often attract industry participants, or by keeping in touch with former laboratory mates and graduate-programme peers who have moved into industry. These people can share their career journeys and put you in touch with the people hiring for roles that best suit you and your career goals.

Bioinformatician Marcela Johnson calls her network “a big asset”. When building it, she let her academic supervisors know of her interest and tapped into their networks for leads. “Although my principal investigators haven’t been in industry,” she says, “every time they saw something on LinkedIn or heard about an opportunity, they would forward it to me.” Her strategy helped her to find her current postdoctoral position at pharmaceutical firm Janssen in Christiansburg, Virginia, in January.

Social-media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter, on which people congregate professionally, are invaluable for building networks. LinkedIn, which allows searches for people by a specific job title, company, industry or skill set, makes it easy to find people who can share details about specific positions and how to get there. When cell biologist Payel Das wrapped up her PhD at Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen, Germany, and was looking for job opportunities to return to her home country of India, LinkedIn provided a head start. “From LinkedIn, I got to know about some of the start-ups that are in Bangalore,” she says, including her current employer Aurigene Oncology.

In her search for industry internships, Johnson experimented with different hashtags on Twitter, such as #bioinformatics, #internships, #summerinternship and #PhDinternship, which helped her to land a virtual internship at biotech company Genentech in San Francisco in 2022. That paid position gave her a sneak peek into the industry world. She now encourages everyone in her network to do as many paid internships as possible. “Being able to experience different companies gives you the opportunity to make a more informed decision once you graduate,” she says. Internship experience also gives prospective employers confidence that you understand how industry works, says Tang.

Building social capital

Connecting on social media takes one click. Building connections with real people who will take time to mentor you takes more effort. Artificial-intelligence (AI) researcher Bikalpa Neupane in Austin, Texas, who works for Takeda Pharmaceuticals in Boston, calls



Career coach Jennifer Polk urges reflection.

this process building your social capital. “It takes time,” he says, reflecting on the years he spent as a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University in University Park between 2015 and 2021, connecting with people in industry. He set up several informational interviews, asking people about their job roles, career journeys, and for their advice on how to prepare his applications and dos and don’ts for the job-interview process. These informal interviews helped him to shape his PhD research on discrimination in AI to make it immediately useful in industry and taught him a few key industry terms so he could use the same vocabulary as industry professionals.

“Experiencing different companies gives you the opportunity to make a more informed decision.”

Informational interviewers should be clear about what they want to know. Don’t be generic and waste your interviewees’ time, says Vashi, who suggests doing your homework and not asking questions that the Internet can answer. For example, she reached out to people whose career roles interested her, and asked questions about what they do in their roles and how they got there. Neupane used a template for reaching out to people on LinkedIn: “Hi, I see that you are in [Company XYZ]. I want to be somewhere like you someday. But I have no idea how to get there. Can I please have 15 minutes of your time to learn about you and your career journey?”

Once you start doing informational interviews, they can also be life-affirming, says Polk, because they can mitigate the isolation and stress that people face when leaving academia. Approach them with your learning hat on and

have these conversations early on, she says. “Now is a great time to go and do informational interviews.”

Acing the job search and application

Platforms such as LinkedIn and the job website Indeed can return overwhelming lists of open positions when searched with keywords such as ‘scientist’ or ‘researcher’. As well as trawling these sites, Vashi went a step further. She regularly searched CrunchBase, a database of companies with investment and funding information, for recently-funded start-ups because they were likely to be hiring soon. She proactively reached out to the chief executives to see whether she was a good fit for the companies.

Ask your network of academia-to-industry converts for tips about hiring, such as the number of rounds of interviews for specific positions and the expectations of prospective employers. These are the best people to also give you feedback on your CV or résumé and cover letter and to help you to tailor them to what people in industry are looking for. Das suggests keeping the summary of your experience short – ideally a page or two – and highlighting skills that align best with the advertised position. If possible, ask a connection at the company to forward your application to the hiring team to increase the chances of it being read, she says. Neupane, who regularly recruits people for his data science and AI team, suggests crafting an elevator pitch about how you will apply your research in industry. “I’m looking for whether you can demonstrate the value of your PhD to the workplace,” he says. Prospective employers look for PhD graduates with good communication skills, business acumen and a willingness to learn new skills, and those who grasp the breadth of the industry.

Because recruiters constantly scan for people to hire on platforms such as LinkedIn, it pays to keep your profile up to date, says Zeppel, including turning on the #OpenToWork banner to show you are job seeking, and adding keywords to the profile that indicate your expertise. Taking these steps helped a recruiter to find Zeppel for her first industry job.

For many who have made the leap, their new industry careers are rewarding – they get to do cutting-edge research, solve real-world problems, earn a handsome salary and often have a better work–life balance than they had in academia. For Zeppel, it is about seeing the impact of her work: “I love the immediacy of questions, analyses and results.” Your first industry job post-PhD might not tick all those boxes, but with persistent information-gathering and networking, you can eventually find your dream position. “Your next job is not your last job,” reminds Polk, “You’ve likely got many decades ahead of you.”

Spoorthy Raman is a freelance science and environment journalist in St. John’s, Canada.

NADALIE BARDOWELL

MY JOB INTERVIEWS FOR INDUSTRY ARE GOING NOWHERE

A postdoctoral researcher trying to move into an industry role seeks ways to gain better traction and make it past the first interview stage. **By Sarah Wild**

THE PROBLEM

Dear *Nature*,
I am currently in my second postdoctoral position, and I am looking for a new job, preferably in the health-science, data-analytics or health-care-analytics industries.

I have been applying for positions for eight months and I am worried that I am doing something wrong. I have responded to more than 500 job advertisements and have had more than 20 interviews, but none of them has led to a job offer. Often, I don't progress past the first round of interviews.

Most of my colleagues are in academia and no one knows much about how multistage interviews for industry positions work. It's a bit of mystery as to why there are so many interviews for one job.

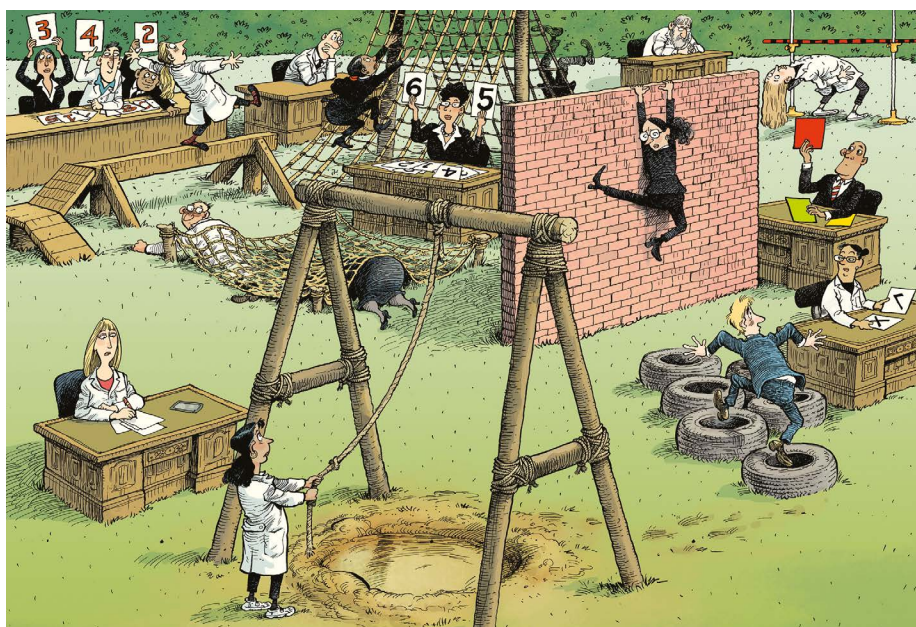
Each stage involves different interviewers, and I don't know how they fit into the process. I talk about my previous research and my skills, but I get the sense that those topics are not what they are interested in – or that I'm approaching the interviews incorrectly.

I know that job hunting is a marathon, not a sprint, but I feel like I'm not moving at all. I would like some guidance on how to approach multistage interviews. How do I prepare for these interviews and present my skills appropriately at each stage? – **A struggling job hunter**

THE ADVICE

Multistage interviews are common at scientific companies. Even if you have all of the necessary qualifications, it is easy to be unsuccessful during the interview process if you do not know how to prepare properly for each stage and showcase your abilities.

In a 2024 global survey, *Nature* asked more than 1,100 hiring managers from academia, industry and other sectors across 77 nations what they were looking for in candidates.



The survey found that 'soft skills', such as communication and interpersonal skills, collaboration and how well people fit in with the team, were high up on the list of priorities for people looking to hire. But listing these skills on a CV or job application is not the same as convincing interviewers that you have them.

Nature's Careers team spoke to recruiters, career coaches and hiring managers, as well as people who have experienced multistage interviews in the past year, to find out what to expect and how to shine throughout the hiring process.

What to expect

A recruiter or talent-acquisition specialist is usually the first point of contact in the hiring process. They have selected you on the basis of your CV and will decide whether you get through to the next round of interviews.

They are the gatekeeper, but they are also your friend, says Alona Bärtschi, head of the career centre at the Paul Scherrer Institute, a natural and engineering sciences research organization in Villigen, Switzerland. "You need to try to get as much information from

them as you can." Companies have diverse hiring processes; some might have four rounds of interviews, and some might hold more or fewer. These details are sometimes posted on their websites. If not, recruiters are the best person to ask about the organization's selection process and who you will be speaking to at each stage. These screening interviews generally last around 30 minutes.

The next stage often involves the hiring manager, who is usually the person who makes the final decision on whether to hire you. They assess whether you would fit into the team and tend to ask behavioural questions, such as "could you tell me about a time when you had to respond to negative feedback?".

Next, there might be a technical interview with someone on the team you would be joining. This interview will focus on your specialist knowledge and whether you can apply your skills to practical problems. It will also gauge how you interact with others. The session might take the form of a panel interview and be run by colleagues at your same career level and people who would report to you if you got the job.

The final stage will probably be an interview with a senior manager, who might focus on strategic questions, such as those about your thoughts on the direction of the field. This enables them to work out if you are someone who will represent their company favourably.

Prepare for your interviews

Preparation is the most important factor for success in interviews, says Benjamin Weber, vice-president of translational and data science at pharmaceutical firm CSL in Zurich, Switzerland. Weber has spent some 15 years as a hiring manager in Europe, North America and Australia. “A major mistake people make, especially for senior roles, is being unprepared and thinking they can wing it.”

There are many ways you can get ready for an interview, ranging from investigating the role and the company – including the common salary range, the company’s hiring process, where its offices are based and the products that it sells – to coming up with pre-packaged stories that showcase your skills, and tailoring them for a variety of audiences.

A common pitfall that interviewees stumble into is not doing enough research on the company. “That’s the bare minimum,” says Elena Hoffer, a career coach based in Stockholm who is the co-founder and chief executive of online career-development platform Alma.Me. Hoffer and Weber suggest that candidates go the extra mile by learning about the business’s services and products, and even contact other people who work at the company to find out about its culture. Applicants could even try to find out why the job is open (see ‘Prepare your own impressive questions’).

Many jobseekers are eliminated from the interview pool early because they have not tailored their answers to the specific stage that they are in. “You need to be strategic,” says Bärtschi. “You need to know who these people are and what their role is in the process.”

The first interview, the one with the recruiter, is crucial because it is where you can gather important information: who you will be speaking to at each stage, why the company is hiring someone and what elements of your CV are relevant to the job.

In all interview rounds, “it’s all about being concise in your communication”, says Hoffer. She warns candidates against rambling. “It’s not about fancy language, and it’s not about sounding smart. It’s about being clear,” she says.

You also need to remember that you are having a conversation with another person. Biologist Sophia Parks, who is based in Dalzell, South Carolina, spent months trying to find a job after her second postdoc position. Now, she is a project manager at the medical-analytics company Health Catalyst in South Jordan, Utah. She says that industry interviews are difficult for people coming from academia

Prepare your own impressive questions

Interviews are two-way conversations, says Susan DiClemente, a career and communications consultant based in Westborough, Massachusetts. “You are also interviewing the company.” Here are some questions an interviewee should ask to ensure that a position is a good fit for them.

- “Are there gaps in my CV for this position?” This is best asked in the first interview with a recruiter because it allows you to address their concerns immediately or prepare your response for when the issue comes up in later interviews.
- “What is the salary range for this position?” This is also best asked in the first interview. If the range is too low, this question saves everyone time. Do your homework to identify an acceptable salary range.
- “What would I need to achieve in the first six months to make you feel that I was a good person to hire?” This helps you to understand how to succeed in the role and encourages the interviewer to imagine you in it.
- “How does your leadership team recognize the value of people’s work and their accomplishments?” This enables you to gauge how your efforts will be supported in the organization and what opportunities for career progress there are.

because “in academia, a question is an attack on your knowledge. But an industry interview is not like that”. She says that her job hunt became easier when she started “having conversations with people instead of lecturing them”.

Structure your answers

To showcase your skills, you need to be able to create an engaging narrative about yourself and your accomplishments. “It’s all about storytelling,” says Susan DiClemente, a communications and career coach based in Westborough, Massachusetts, who has spent 20 or so years working at a large pharmaceutical company.

It can be difficult to come up with a story about yourself on the spur of the moment, so you should prepare a handful of anecdotes beforehand. DiClemente recommends looking at the job description and role responsibilities and thinking of times when you displayed that ability or shouldered a similar responsibility.

Bärtschi and Weber suggest that you draw up a list of common interview requests – such as ‘tell me about yourself’, ‘discuss a time when you failed’ and ‘give me an example of a moment when you resolved a conflict’ – and prepare stories for each.

Importantly, be able to back up your CV with real events. Weber remembers an interviewee who stated that they were resilient on their CV but, when pressed, was unable to give an example of their resilience.

The hiring managers and recruiters that *Nature* spoke to recommended using the STAR method as a framework for your responses, which stands for situation, task, action and result. The method encourages people to explain a scenario that they have encountered in their career so far and describe a task that they were asked to take on at the time. Then, they should discuss what actions they took to tackle the objective or problem and what the result of those actions was, as well as what they learnt from the experience.

Interview questions, especially behavioural ones asked by hiring managers, are often used to assess several things at once, Hoffer notes. For example, if an interviewer says ‘tell me about a time when you received negative feedback’, they will be on the lookout for whether you blame others or take responsibility. “It’s a way of understanding who you are and how you’ll fit in with the team,” she says.

Likewise, when an interviewer says ‘tell me about yourself’, Hoffer notes that “they don’t want your entire life story”. Instead, tell them what achievements make you a good fit for the position and the company.

It is also becoming common for organizations to ask candidates to prepare case studies – that is, asking them to prepare examples of how they would tackle specific tasks. For example, you might be given materials in advance that outline a problem or a project and asked to prepare a presentation on how to solve the problem or design and run the project. Finally, you deliver your talk and field questions from a group of interviewers. Case studies exhibit how you think and respond to real-world situations, says Bärtschi. They reveal whether your vision for the role aligns with the company’s, even though they can be time consuming to prepare.

Although daunting, multistage interviews are ultimately trying to make sure that you are the right person for the job. Bärtschi and other hiring specialists emphasize that you should be authentic in your responses, and be your best professional self, because you do not want to be hired for a role that you do not belong in.

“If you’re in the wrong position,” Hoffer says, “it’s not going to be good for you, and it’s not going to be good for the company”.

Sarah Wild is a freelance journalist in Canterbury, UK.

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CAREER COLUMN | 14 July 2026

Seeking an industry role after your PhD? Make sure your CV reflects that

A doctorate can open many doors. A CV tailored to your planned career path can help to unlock them.

By [Elena Hoffer](#)

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To succeed in getting a job in industry, explain the skills you acquired in the laboratory in terms that industry recruiters will understand. Credit: Portra/Getty

I loved the intellectual challenge of my PhD and the idea that my research into immune cells in human skin could one day contribute to better patient care.

But solitary hours at the laboratory bench, early-morning starts and late-night finishes were not for me. And I wanted to work with people, not pipettes. I asked myself: what else can I even do with my PhD?

After talking to various people, I learnt that my doctorate could open many more doors than I had ever imagined, but I had no idea how to get through them. The skills I'd acquired (data analysis, managing multiple projects, collaboration, presentation, critical thinking, persistence and handling ambiguity among them) weren't the problem.

The problem was knowing how to communicate them in my CV (or résumé) to try for roles in industry, a sector that often measures success in a different way.

Academia rewards scholarly achievement: publications, awards, conference presentations. By contrast, industry rewards impact. So an academic CV might not get you anywhere when it comes to winning industry roles.

I now conduct workshops across Europe and the United States on CVs for industry, after founding [Alma.Me](#), a company that helps PhD holders transition to industry. Co-founder Angela Priest, who has two decades of experience of industry hiring, and I have helped hundreds of early-career researchers, some of whom have landed roles at companies such as pharmaceutical firm Sanofi, the US mortgage association Fannie Mae and online-payment processor PayPal.

We're constantly asked about academic CVs and their suitability for industry roles. I respond by saying that academia cares more about where you studied, what you published and which conferences accepted your work, whereas industry cares more about outcomes: can you deliver results and contribute to team success? Understanding that difference is important because it affects how you present yourself in each environment.

One workshop attendee had spent months unsuccessfully applying for industry jobs. She was exhausted, frustrated and starting to doubt herself. She restructured her CV, adjusted the language and reframed her PhD work so that it spoke to an industry audience. Within weeks she was getting interviews, followed by a job offer soon after.

Here's a list of top tips to follow.

Make the CV structure easy to scan

In academia, a CV of six or more pages signals thoroughness; in industry, it signals the opposite. On average, industry recruiters spend around six seconds scanning a CV

before deciding whether to read on. Length doesn't impress them; clarity does. So aim for at most two pages, and see it as an opportunity to demonstrate that you understand concise communication, a highly valued skill in industry.

Include lots of white space, signal a clear hierarchy using bullet points and use a single font and no colour. A single-column layout reads more cleanly than one with multiple columns, and is more reliably parsed by electronic applicant-tracking systems. Put your name, LinkedIn handle, Github account, e-mail and phone number in the header.

I'm often asked about including a photo. In my view, you can never go wrong by not including your picture. Photos are hardly used on CVs in the United States and United Kingdom and are becoming less common across other European countries because they can elicit biases. I suggest that you do some quick research about the convention in the country where you are applying. But when in doubt, leave the photo out.

Put a professional summary at the top

Instead of leading with educational achievements, put a four-to-six-line professional summary at the top that gives an immediate sense of who you are, what level you're at and what you can bring to the role. A generic "experienced researcher with a PhD in molecular biology" tells a recruiter almost nothing.

Connect your background to the role and name the skills that matter most to it, by establishing your identity, demonstrating your capability and signalling your direction.

For example: "Detail-oriented, methodical research scientist with 4+ years experience designing experiments that advance drug-discovery programmes. Expert in single-cell RNA sequencing, CRISPR-Cas9 and flow cytometry, generating reproducible, high-quality data under demanding timelines. Driven by biological questions with real therapeutic consequence. Brings deep bench expertise and a collaborative mindset to an industry environment in which scientific rigour shapes the pipeline."

Add a skills section next

Rather than listing every lab technique you have ever used, group skills under broad categories with specific examples, and use no more than one-third of a page.

Something like “molecular biology techniques: scRNAseq, ELISA, Western blot” is immediately scannable without losing depth.

List professional experience after that

I suggest three to five bullet points under this heading. Put your PhD details here rather than just in the education section.

Remember that you weren't merely sitting in lectures. you were identifying problems, designing solutions and producing results under uncertainty.

Add your university's or institution's name and underneath put either “doctoral researcher” or “PhD researcher” as a first heading with a summary (one or two sentences) of each element of your professional experience to give context to the bullet points.

Many industry jobseekers describe what they did, not what they achieved. Instead, start with a strong verb, say what you achieved, explain how you did it and always end with the result. Swap technical jargon for plain language; you are writing for recruiters and hiring managers, not a reviewer in your field.

For example, during my PhD at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, I optimized a cell-recovery protocol. Writing “Isolated cells from human skin samples” would have told a recruiter nothing about the result I achieved or its value.

Instead, I wrote: “Optimized skin isolation protocol to recover 30% more cells per sample, reducing experiment turnaround time and enabling downstream analysis.” This

shows I created value; I made something better, faster, more efficient. That's what industry looks for.

The same logic applies beyond the lab. Perhaps you organized a careers fair. You could write: "Organized a careers fair for PhD students." But what actually happened because of you? How about "Organized a career fair attended by 150 PhD students and 30 companies, achieving a 20% candidate-to-company matching rate."? Now a recruiter can see scale, initiative and outcome.

Similarly, saying "Presented research at conferences and lab meetings" tells a hiring manager little, unlike "Presented findings to audiences of up to 300 scientists across three international conferences, translating complex immunology data into accessible insights for non-specialist audiences." This shows a range of experiences, confidence in what you do and demonstrable communication skills.

Early-career researchers often undersell committee work. "Served on the PhD student committee" is easy for a recruiter to overlook. What is harder to miss is "Negotiated with university leadership and the union to secure a 5% salary increase for all PhD students at the institution."

That single line demonstrates stakeholder management, negotiation and the ability to drive change at an organizational level – exactly the kind of evidence industry is looking for.

I also recommend omitting the years when you graduated to reduce the risk of unconscious age bias in the early stages of screening.

As for publications, they don't belong in a CV for industry, but if you want to add them, put in links to them. Sometimes a job advertisement will seek evidence of high-impact publications. If so, focus on two or three, but don't be tempted to include your entire publication list.

Tailor your offering

The responsibilities of a data scientist, a research scientist in industry and a medical writer are entirely different. A CV that tries to speak to all three career options will resonate with none of the hiring managers seeking to fill these roles.

Take a step back before you start writing. Decide what kind of role you actually want, understand how success is measured in that world and build your CV around the skills that matter there.

A data scientist moving into a product role, for example, needs to demonstrate experience of A/B split testing (a randomized experiment to compare two approaches or outcomes), programming and analytical thinking – skills that are consistently required across companies, in my experience.

Then connect your background to the organization you are applying to: why this company, and what is it about their work that speaks to you? A focused, thoughtfully tailored CV will always outperform a general one sent everywhere.

Artificial intelligence

It's impossible to ignore AI and its growing role in science recruitment. But my advice is clear: do not use AI to write your CV. The technology is very good at recognizing patterns, so AI will produce a document that looks like thousands of others. You might not notice it yourself, but anyone in corporate recruitment who reads perhaps hundreds of CVs a day will spot it immediately.

Instead, AI can be a useful support tool, to translate something you read in a job description into academic language, for example. So use it as a starting point but apply your own critical thinking, verify that the AI-tuned result is accurate and make sure your own voice comes through.

Remember that you are in a world in which many of your competitors display similar skills to yours. What makes you different? It's your unique skill set and personality. Don't let AI erase that.

Endings and beginnings

Looking back, my realization halfway through my own PhD that I didn't want a career at the lab bench wasn't the end of something. It was the beginning of my understanding that the skills I was building could open doors I hadn't even imagined.

If you're facing that moment right now, the question you must answer isn't whether you're qualified for industry; it's whether you're ready to translate your value into a language that industry recruiters understand. You already have every skill you need. Now show them.

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This is an article from the Nature Careers Community, a place for Nature readers to share their professional experiences and advice. [Guest posts are encouraged.](#)

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests.

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